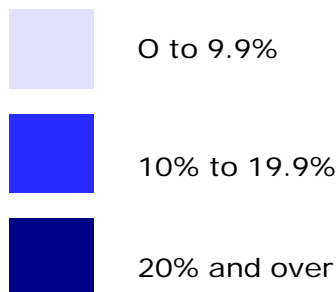
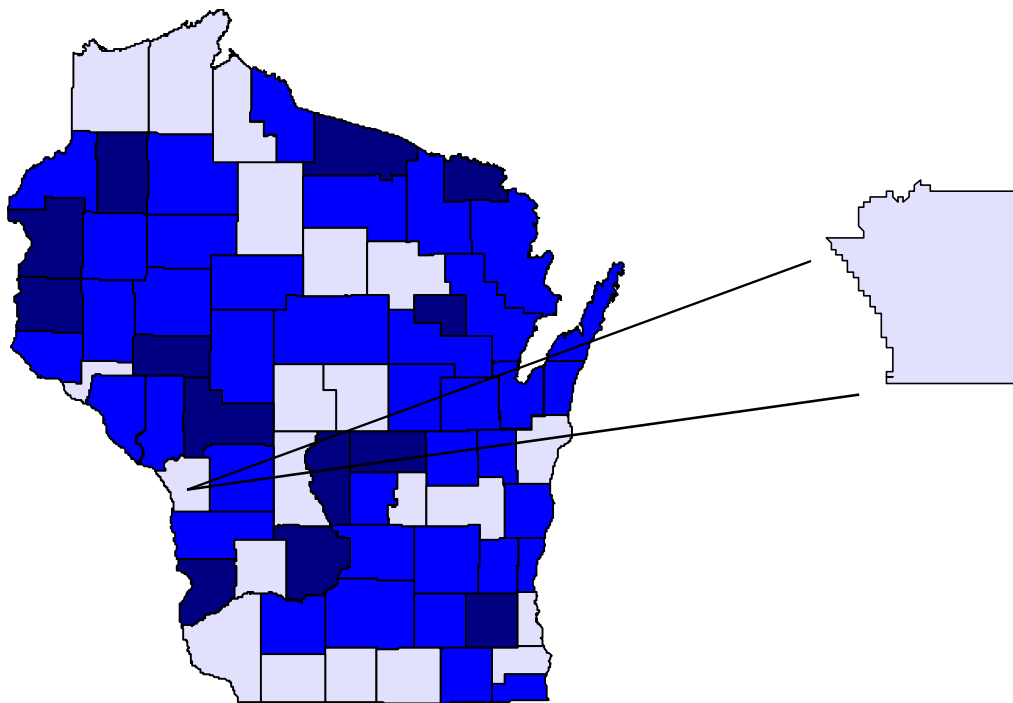


La Crosse County Workforce Profile

Job Growth 1994 to 1999



Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development
Division of Workforce Solutions
Bureau of Workforce Information
October 2001



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Introduction

The County Workforce Profile has been developed by the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development's (DWD) Bureau of Workforce Information (BWI) to provide a broad overview of La Crosse County's labor market. The data included in this fourth year of publication is for 1999 to maintain consistency with the previous publications and to provide the user with a single year of reference in order to draw comparisons and form a picture of related labor force and employment information.

A variety of economic and demographic labor market information have been provided to describe the current labor market conditions in the counties and regions of Wisconsin. That information includes 1999 data on population, labor force, industries, employment, wages and income. The narrative describes how local conditions have changed over one-year and five-year intervals. Although population information is available from the 2000 census, it is not included in this publication since the period of time selected for all data sets is 1999. For more recent releases of information please consult the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development Labor Market Information website: <http://www.dwd.state.wi.us/lmi>.

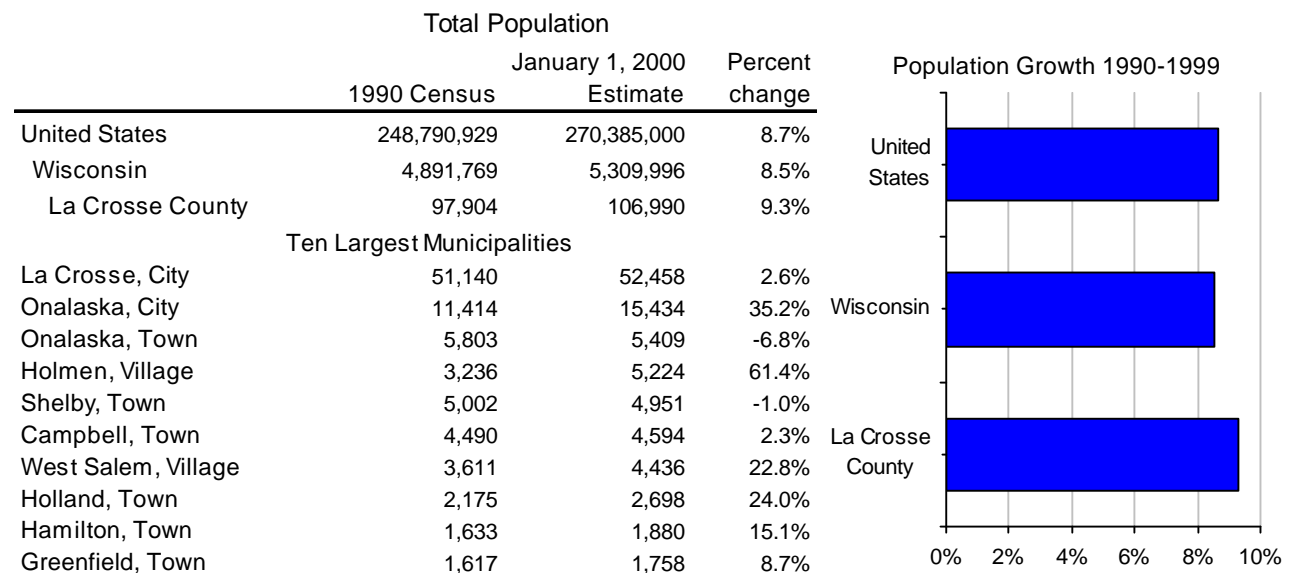
For more detailed information or clarification, please contact your local labor market analyst,
Bill Brockmiller, by telephone (608-785-9337) or email (brockwi@dwd.state.wi.us).

DWD is an equal opportunity service provider. If you need assistance to access services or material in an alternate format, please contact the analyst listed above.

La Crosse County Population and Civilian Labor Force

According to 1999 estimates from the Wisconsin Department of Administration, La Crosse's population has increased by about 9,100 persons since the 1990 Census. There are two components to population estimates; net migration (people moving into the county less people moving out of the county) and natural increase (births less deaths). La Crosse County population growth during the 1990s decade was evenly split between these two components. Net natural increase accounted for about 4.5 percent of the growth recorded in La Crosse County and net immigration accounted for 4.8 percent of the increase.

The county's largest city, La Crosse, has experienced very modest population growth during this decade. The lion's share of the county's rapid population growth is occurring in outlying areas. Municipalities like Onalaska and Holmen are outpacing the City of La Crosse's population growth measured both as a percentage and in absolute terms. Towns like Holland, Hamilton, and West Salem have also reported rapid growth rates during the 1990s decade.



* La Crosse County portion only

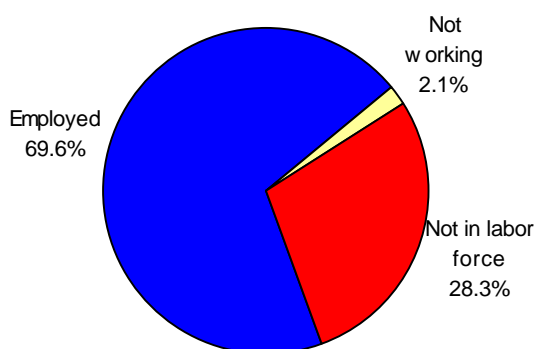
Source: WI Dept. of Admin., Demographic Services Center, *Official Population Estimates*, January 1, 2000

The labor force is composed of county residents, 16 years and older, who are either working or looking for work. It does not include individuals who have made a choice to not work: retirees, homemakers, and students; nor does it include active duty military personnel.

The labor force grows and contracts with changes in the population and changes in the seasons. Each spring, the La Crosse County labor force expands as students begin searching for summer jobs. The labor force is dependent on the number of residents in the county; and their interest in the jobs that are available.

In 1999, the participation rate fell slightly in La Crosse County, to 71.7 percent. Wisconsin's rate also fell in 1999, dipping down to 72.3 percent, still well ahead of the nation's rate, which remained at 67.1 percent. Participation rates are often the result of the economic and demographic conditions of an area.

1999 Labor Force Participation



The age cohort 25-39 years of age has been declining in La Crosse County. In many cases, these are the children of the baby boomers. There was no noticeable 'baby blip' in La Crosse County following the baby boom. The 'baby blip' increase in population on a national scale was not the result of boomers having children, as boomers had fewer kids than their parents. Instead, the 'baby blip' or 'baby echo' as it is sometimes called occurred only in areas with sizeable minority populations. As of 2000-2001 estimates from the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development, La Crosse's population is 95 percent white non-minority.

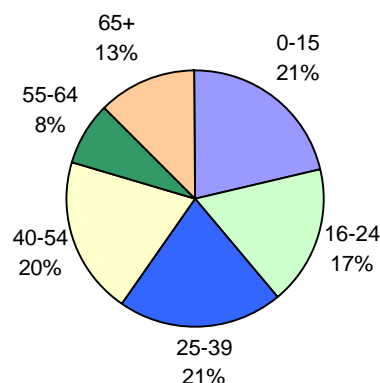
Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Administration population estimates, Jan 2000, US Census Bureau, and Local Area Unemployment Statistics

Even with some economic declines of late, employers in La Crosse County that count on the 25-39 age cohort are finding it increasingly difficult to find and retain

workers. They are turning to other age cohorts and different recruitment methods in order to help fill their needs. As in much of Wisconsin, the La Crosse 40-54 age cohort is posting huge increases in population as the baby boomers age. The growth in this cohort will continue. The types of services demanded by persons over 40 are quite different, and are often more 'hands-on' intensive. For example, persons over the age of 40 require more health care services than those under the age of 40. As the average age in La Crosse County and Wisconsin continues to increase, the demand for workers with an ability to provide these services will intensify.

La Crosse County Labor Force Age Population Distribution

Age Group	Population		Percent change
	1990 Census	1999 Estimate	
0-15	21,871	22,998	5.2%
16-24	17,437	18,504	6.1%
25-39	23,421	22,135	-5.5%
40-54	15,186	21,500	41.6%
55-64	7,457	8,358	12.1%
65+	12,533	13,495	7.7%



Source: Estimated from WI Dept of Admin, Demographic Services Center, Official Population Projections 1990-2020 and US Census Bureau

La Crosse County Civilian Labor Force Data

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Labor Force	58,200	59,400	60,500	60,600	60,500	59,200
Employed	55,800	57,200	58,700	58,800	58,800	57,500
Unemployed	2,390	2,200	1,810	1,800	1,680	1,730
Unemployment Rate	4.1%	3.7%	3.0%	3.0%	2.8%	2.9%

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

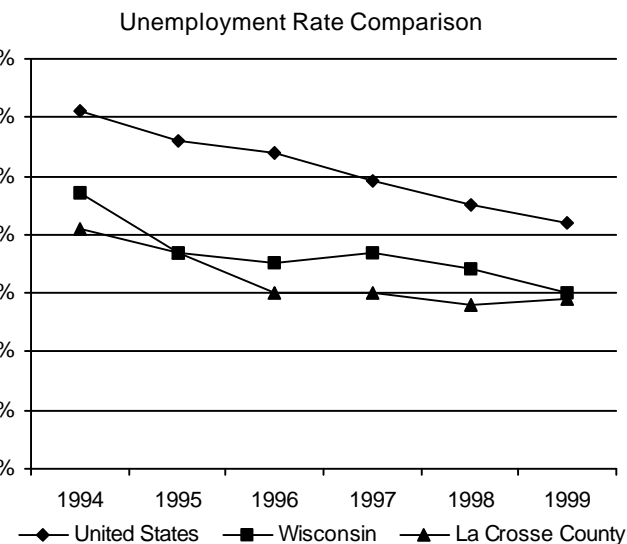
Unemployment rates have been on the decline during the five year time period detailed in the graph on the right in much of Wisconsin, including La Crosse County.

Out of a total labor force in 1999 of 59,200, 2.9 percent were unemployed, lower than state and national rates. The 1999 La Crosse County rate is up 0.1 percentage points from the 1998 unemployment rate, which was a record low annual rate for the county at 2.8 percent. The size of the labor force and declined slightly and the number of persons unemployed increased slightly in 1999.

Since 1999 unemployment rates have increased a bit in La Crosse, but remain low by historical standards.

Even in the face of manufacturing layoffs in late 2000 and 2001, La Crosse employment rates have remained relatively low. This is a testament to the diversity of La Crosse's local economy.

The regional and national economic slowdown has not hit La Crosse as severely as it has in other parts of the state, due in part, to La Crosse's diversified local economy. As of 1999, 17.2 percent of La Crosse's workforce had a job in the manufacturing industry. On a statewide basis that percentage was 22.2 percent. Nearby counties like Trempealeau



Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics

and Juneau have substantially higher percentages of persons working in manufacturing, with 41.7 and 33 percent respectively. Counties with high percentages of manufacturing employment have been hardest hit by the recent economic slowdown.

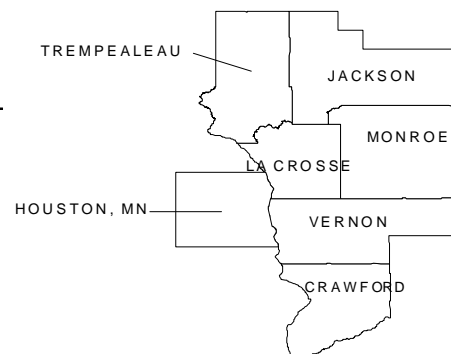
La Crosse County has several strong health care service employers, an industry more resistant to economic downturns. In addition, La Crosse enjoys being home to three institutes of higher learning.

La Crosse County Commuting Patterns

	Commute Into	Commute From	Net Commute
Minnesota, State of	756	3,247	2,491
Iowa, State of	6	135	129
Trempealeau County	301	863	562
Jackson County	97	210	113
Monroe County	842	903	61
Vernon County	363	2,040	1,677
Crawford County	29	117	88
Elsewhere	853	113	-740
Total	3,247	7,628	4,381

Work within La Crosse County 44,878

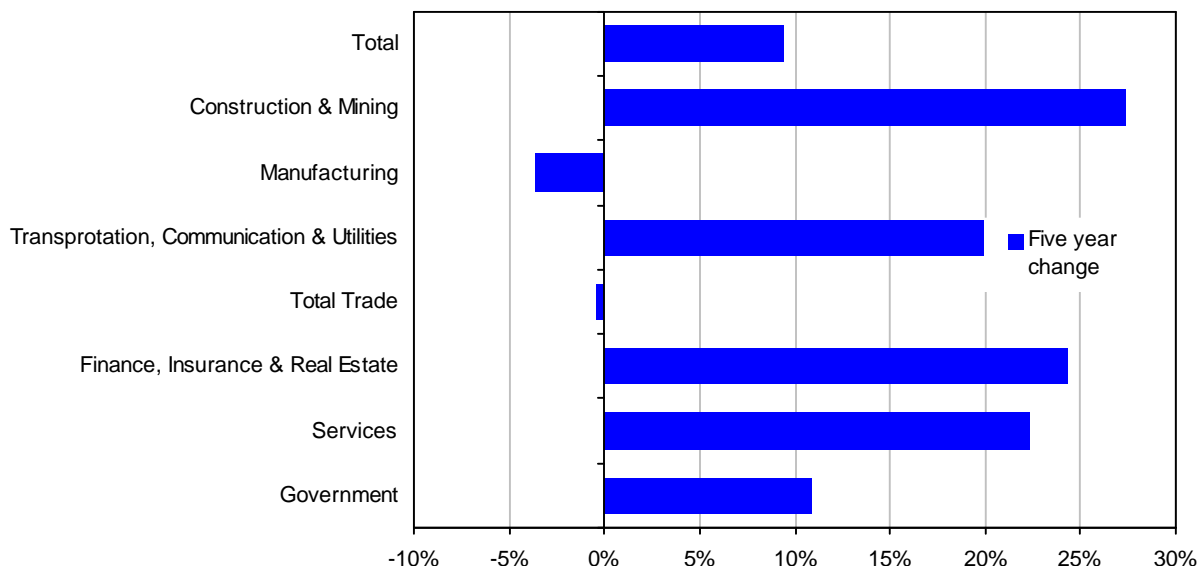
Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information. Wisconsin's Commuting Patterns, 1994.



La Crosse County employers receive a substantial number of workers from other counties and states. According to 1990 Census figures La Crosse County nets a gain of almost 4,400 workers commuting into the county on a daily basis for employment. La Crosse County is one of a very few "border" counties in Wisconsin that gains more workers from neighboring states than it loses to neighboring states during the daily commute. Commuting data from Census 2000 is not available yet, but it is anticipated that when it does become available, La Crosse County will continue to be a work 'magnet' attracting workers from other counties and states.

As of the 1990 Census, there were two counties, Vernon County, Wisconsin and Houston County, Minnesota, that each supplied a net gain of more than 1,000 workers daily to La Crosse County employers. Population counts from Vernon County verify that much of the population growth in that county since 1990 has occurred in the North—Northwest part of that county. Many of the people moving into that part of Vernon County are commuting into La Crosse County everyday to work.

La Crosse County Employment Change by Industry 1994 to 1999



	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent change	
							1 year	5 year
Total	60,105	61,542	62,207	63,178	64,700	65,788	1.7%	9.5%
Goods Producing	14,004	13,410	13,454	13,598	14,193	14,197	0.0%	1.4%
Construction & Mining	2,239	2,260	2,438	2,492	2,614	2,852	9.1%	27.4%
Manufacturing	11,765	11,151	11,015	11,106	11,579	11,346	-2.0%	-3.6%
Durable	5,408	5,729	5,908	5,983	6,225	6,036	-3.0%	11.6%
Nondurable	6,357	5,421	5,108	5,123	5,355	5,310	-0.8%	-16.5%
Service Producing	46,101	48,132	48,753	49,580	50,508	51,590	2.1%	11.9%
Transportation, Communications & Utilities	2,387	2,375	2,348	2,281	2,594	2,882	11.1%	20.7%
Total Trade	17,473	19,023	18,957	18,721	18,585	17,397	-6.4%	-0.4%
Wholesale	4,367	4,309	4,126	3,991	3,986	4,282	7.4%	-1.9%
Retail	13,105	14,715	14,832	14,730	14,599	13,115	-10.2%	0.1%
Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate	2,408	2,179	2,611	2,732	2,836	2,993	5.5%	24.3%
Services & Misc.	16,528	17,170	17,276	18,245	18,786	20,215	7.6%	22.3%
Total Government	7,307	7,385	7,561	7,601	7,706	8,103	5.1%	10.9%

Source: WIDWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, Nonfarm Wage & Salary estimates.

Nonfarm wage and salary employment measures the number of jobs within a county excluding individual family farms, military, and self-employed workers. This data measures the number of jobs within the county without consideration of where the job-holder lives.

In La Crosse County, nonfarm wage and salary employment has increased by about 5,700 during the period 1994-1999. While the construction industry experienced the greatest percentage change in employment during this time period, the numerical growth in employment during this time was a moderate increase just over 600. The sector that experienced the largest numerical growth during this time was the service industry group, increasing employment by 3,700. Almost half of all employment in the service industry in La Crosse County is in the health services sector, which is a much higher representation than the state or national average level of health services employment as part of service industry employment.

In manufacturing, an increase in durable goods manufacturing over the 1994-1999 time period was more than offset by decline in nondurable goods manufacturing employment. Nondurable goods are products that have a useful life of less than three years. La Crosse County nondurable goods employment declined further with the closing of the Stroh/Heileman Brewery in August 1999, displacing approximately 550 workers. Sizeable layoffs and the eventual closing of La Crosse Footwear in late 2000 and early 2001 will drag down non-durable employment levels in La Crosse further as future numbers are released.

La Crosse County's Largest Industries and Employers

Top 10 Industry Groups

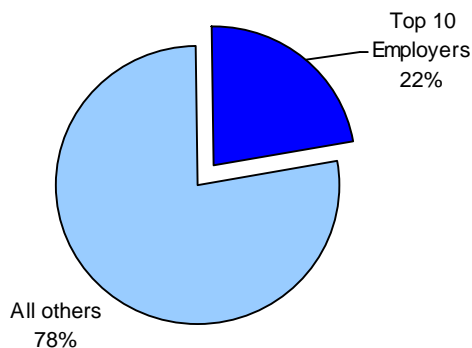
Industry Group	March 2000		Numerical Change	
	Employers	Employment	1 Year	5 Years
Health Services	101	8,880	32	1065
Educational Services	21	5,355	367	882
Eating And Drinking Places	207	4,876	1	-63
Industrial Machinery And Equipment	*	*	*	*
Business Services	139	3,111	145	1352
Wholesale Trade-Nondurable Goods	70	2,471	206	-86
Social Services	59	2,338	136	22
Rubber And Misc. Plastics Products	14	1,903	-155	*
General Merchandise Stores	*	*	*	*
Wholesale Trade-Durable Goods	108	1,710	20	92

Top 10 Private Sector Employers

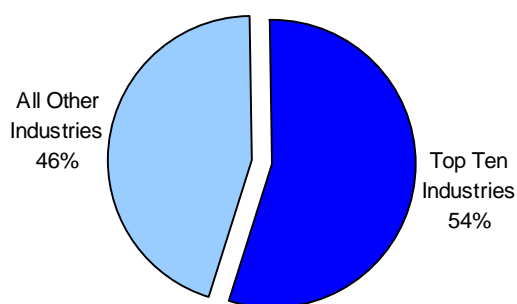
Company	Product or Service	Size
Trane	Refrigeration/Heating Equipment	1000+
Gundersen Clinic	Health Care	1000+
Lutheran Hospital Crosse	General Hospital	1000+
Franciscan Skemp Medical Center	Health Care and Hospital	1000+
Northern Automotive Systems	Industrial Laminated Plastics	500-999
First Federal Savings Bank	Bank	500-999
Kwik Trip	Convenience Stores	500-999
Reinhart Foodservice	Grocery Warehousing and Distribution	500-999
Fleming Companies	Grocery Warehousing and Distribution	250-499
Company Store	Catalog Retailer	250-499

Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information Bureau, ES-202 file tape, 1st quarter 1999 and LMI benchmark 2000.

Top 10 Private Sector Employers
Share of Nonfarm Employment



Top 10 Industry Groups
Share of Nonfarm Employment



The top ten private sector employers employed 22 percent of all workers working in La Crosse County in 1999, a nominal change from the 23 percent reported in 1998. Just two of the ten largest private employers are in the manufacturing industry in La Crosse County. This is a reflection of the diverse and varied local economy in La Crosse. La Crosse Footwear fell off the list in 1999 after a round of layoffs. The layoffs continued at Footwear and the facility is largely closed at this time.

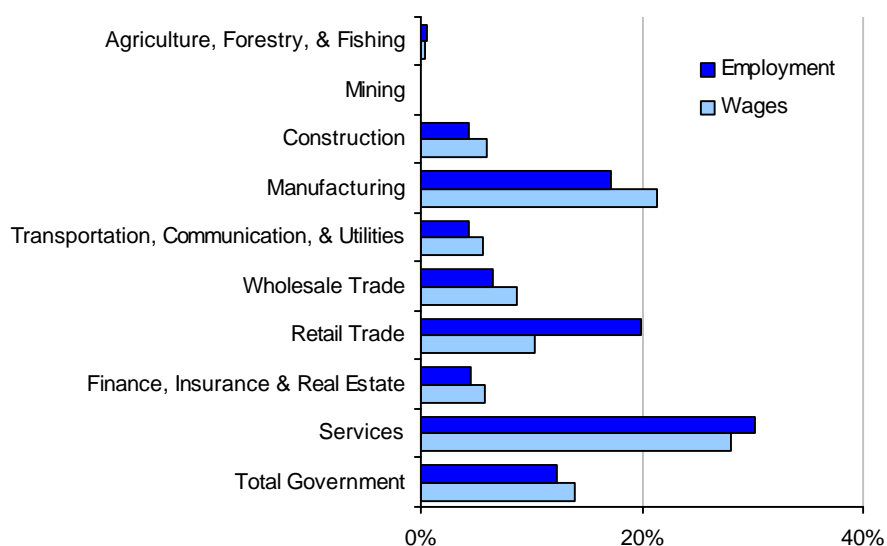
The first eight of the top ten private employers were unchanged in 1999. However, Northern Engraving's standing on the list may change in the coming years, as the company has had to layoff some workers.

More than manufacturing, La Crosse County's local economy is based on health care, retail trade, wholesale trade, and education. La Crosse has two major hospitals/health care organizations, three institutes of higher learning, many stores and shops, and a major catalog retailer. Two nondurable goods warehousing companies made the top ten employers list in 1999.

La Crosse County Employment and Wages 1999

	Annual Average Wage	State Average Wage	Percent of State Average	Percent change 1 year	Percent change 5 year	Number of Workers
All Industries	\$26,477	\$29,609	89.4%	4.1%	20.6%	62,958
Agriculture, Forestry, & Fishing	\$21,526	\$21,499	100.1%	-2.7%	20.0%	322
Mining	*	\$39,968	*	*	*	*
Construction	\$35,961	\$36,772	97.8%	0.0%	20.8%	2,729
Manufacturing	\$32,888	\$37,773	87.1%	3.2%	23.7%	10,857
Transportation, Communications, & Utilities	\$33,395	\$34,523	96.7%	4.6%	21.7%	2,758
Wholesale Trade	\$35,401	\$38,048	93.0%	5.2%	22.7%	4,098
Retail Trade	\$13,653	\$15,066	90.6%	4.8%	19.1%	12,550
Finance, Insurance, & Real estate	\$33,198	\$37,911	87.6%	9.4%	37.8%	2,864
Services	\$24,576	\$26,041	94.4%	0.1%	16.6%	19,023
Total Government	\$30,134	\$32,017	94.1%	1.2%	14.2%	7,754

Total Employment and Wage Distribution by Industry Division

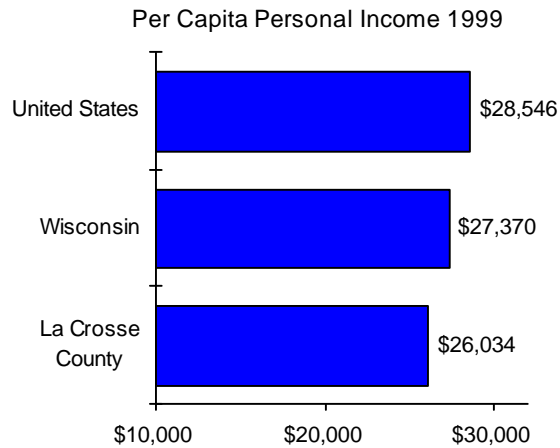


Source: WI DWD, Bureau of Workforce Information, *Employment, Wages and Taxes Due covered by Wisconsin's U.C. Law, Tables 209-211.*

The average wage for all industries in La Crosse County was 89.4 percent of Wisconsin's average wage in 1999. This percentage declined from 1998, when La Crosse County wages were 93.1 percent of the statewide average wage. In 1998, four major industry groups, agriculture, construction, transportation, and services, reported average annual wages above the statewide average. In 1999, three of those industries dropped below the statewide average leaving agriculture as the only industry in La Crosse County paying wages in excess of the statewide average. Average annual wages paid in the agriculture industry in La Crosse County are just over the statewide average. Most of the workers in this industry in La Crosse County are employed by agriculture services establishments such as veterinarians and landscapers. In 1999, only 322 workers were employed in this industry (this statistical series does not include numbers from individual family farms), and despite their relatively high earnings, accounted for less than one percent of all wages paid in La Crosse County.

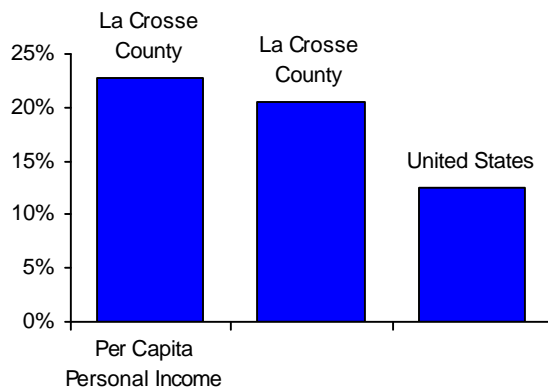
Average annual wages between the State of Wisconsin and La Crosse County vary for several reasons. One is that the state average is heavily influenced by the state's three largest urban areas; Milwaukee, Madison, and Green Bay. In addition, some of the difference is due to the different occupational mix in La Crosse County. In 1999, 20 percent of La Crosse County's workforce was working in the retail trade industry, compared to the statewide percentage of 18 percent in 1999. The retail trade industry employs a large number of entry-level workers and over 50 percent of the employment is part-time with many employed only on a seasonal basis. These factors lower the amount of wages a worker in the retail trade industry can earn.

La Crosse County Wage and Income Data



Per capita income is total income divided by the total number of residents. Income includes wages earned, dividends from investments, and transfer payments from the government. La Crosse County's per capita income ranked 16th out of Wisconsin's 72 counties during 1999. Per capita income can be influenced by the number of wage earners, average family size, and the median age of the residents. Per capita income can influence the type of services and housing available within a county.

Over the past five years, La Crosse County per capita income has increased by 22.8 percent and wages earned in La Crosse County have increased by 20.6 percent. Both measures of county income out gained the rate of inflation as measured by the Consumer Price Index, which rose less than 15 percent during the five year period.



The PCPI in La Crosse County, with its increase of 22.8 percent in the last five years, lagged both national and state growth of 26.4 and 26.1 percent, respectively. La Crosse County's 1998-1999 growth rate lagged behind the state and national PCPI growth rate by almost one percent.

Per Capita Personal Income

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	Percent Change	
							1 year	5 year
United States	\$22,581	\$23,562	\$24,651	\$25,874	\$27,321	\$28,546	4.5%	26.4%
Wisconsin	\$21,699	\$22,573	\$23,554	\$24,791	\$26,227	\$27,370	4.4%	26.1%
La Crosse County	\$21,194	\$21,573	\$22,533	\$23,662	\$25,100	\$26,034	3.7%	22.8%

Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System.

Selected Occupational Wage Data

	Mean	Median
Cashier	\$ 7.17	\$ 6.81
Cleaner/Janitor	\$ 8.51	\$ 7.99
Computer Programmer	\$ 17.08	\$ 17.04
Computer Support Specialists	\$ 14.91	\$ 14.49
Cook, Fast Food	\$ 6.39	\$ 6.28
Dental Hygienist	\$ 23.02	\$ 23.43
Licensed Practical Nurse	\$ 12.66	\$ 12.39
Nurse Aide/Orderly	\$ 8.99	\$ 9.02
Physical Therapists	\$ 24.67	\$ 23.99
Registered Nurse	\$ 18.45	\$ 17.92
Teacher, Preschool	\$ 8.46	\$ 7.86
Tire Repairers & Changers	\$ 8.55	\$ 8.56
Truck Driver, Light	\$ 10.32	\$ 9.89
Truck Driver, Tractor Trailer	\$ 15.47	\$ 13.05
Speech-Language Pathologists	\$ 19.62	\$ 19.56

Source: DWD, BWI, 1999 OES wage survey for La Crosse MSA

Wages paid for work within a county can impact the type of goods and services which may be purchased. Examining wage structures can be an important part of the hiring process for both job seekers and employers. The mean wage is the sum of all wages divided by the number of wage earners; this is often referred to as an "average". The median wage is the midpoint of all wages; there are exactly the same number of wage earners above and below this wage. If the mean and median are relatively close the labor market for that particular worker is probably tight or very competitive. If the median is significantly below the mean, an employer offering mean wages should capture most of the market. Similarly, for workers in that occupation it will be difficult to find the job which pays the mean wage.